

P-3959/2P1

IN THE CLAIMS

Claim 17 (previously presented) An assembly for enabling separation of a fluid sample into first and second phases, comprising:

a tube having a bottom, a top, and a cylindrical sidewall therebetween,

a separator located in the tube, the separator comprising:

a deformable bellows having an upper end and a lower end, and a sealing portion of the bellows between the upper end and the lower end providing sealing engagement with the cylindrical sidewall of the tube,

a ballast engaged with a portion of the bellows, the ballast having a density greater than the density of the first phase,

a float engaged with a portion of the bellows, the float having a density less than the density of the first phase,

wherein application of centrifugal forces to the tube promotes elongation of the bellows such that the sealing portion is able to move out of sealing engagement with the cylindrical sidewall.

Claim 18 (previously presented) The assembly of claim 17, wherein the ballast is secured to the bellows at a location proximate the lower end of the bellows.

Claim 19 (previously presented) The assembly of claim 17, wherein the float is engageable with portions of the bellows proximate the upper end of the bellows.

Claim 20 (previously presented) The assembly of claim 17, wherein the ballast is secured to the bellows at a location proximate the lower end of the bellows, wherein the float is engageable with portions of the bellows proximate the upper end of the bellows, and wherein upon application of centrifugal force, the ballast and the float exert opposing forces on the bellows to provide the elongation.

Claim 21 (previously presented) The assembly of claim 17, wherein the sealing portion of the bellows between the upper end and the lower end is a toroidal sealing section.

P-3959/2P1

Claim 22 (previously presented) The assembly of claim 18, wherein the ballast is substantially tubular.

Claim 23 (previously presented) The assembly of claim 19, wherein the float is substantially hollow.

Claim 24 (previously presented) The assembly of claim 19, wherein the bellows is substantially hollow and comprises an inwardly directed annular bead proximate the upper end of the bellows, and wherein the float comprises an annular groove engageable with the annular bead of the bellows.

Claim 25 (previously presented) The assembly of claim 17, wherein the tube comprises a closure at its top end, and wherein the separator is releasably engaged to the closure.

Claim 26 (previously presented) The assembly of claim 25, wherein the closure comprises a lower end comprising a recess, and wherein the bellows comprises a section releasably engageable with the recess.

Claim 27 (previously presented) The assembly of claim 26, wherein the recess comprises deflectable arc sections, and wherein the bellows comprises a groove releasably engageable with the deflectable arc sections.

Claim 28 (previously presented) The assembly of claim 17, wherein the bottom end of the tube comprises an opening having a closure engaged therein.

Claim 29 (previously presented) The assembly of claim 24, wherein the upper end of the bellows comprises a conical shape.

P-3959/2P1

Claim 30 (previously presented) The assembly of claim 17, wherein at least a portion of the float is arranged inside the bellows, and wherein at least a portion of the ballast is arranged outside the bellows.

Claim 31 (previously presented) An separator for enabling separation of a fluid sample into first and second phases within a tube, comprising:

a deformable bellows having an upper end and a lower end, and a sealing portion of the bellows between the upper end and the lower end providing sealing engagement with a cylindrical sidewall of the tube,

a ballast engaged with a portion of the bellows, the ballast having a density greater than the density of the first phase,

a float engaged with a portion of the bellows, the float having a density less than the density of the first phase,

wherein application of centrifugal forces to the tube promotes elongation of the bellows such that the sealing portion is able to move out of sealing engagement with the cylindrical sidewall.

Claim 32 (previously presented) The assembly of claim 31, wherein the ballast is secured to the bellows at a location proximate the lower end of the bellows.

Claim 33 (previously presented) The assembly of claim 31, wherein the float is engageable with portions of the bellows proximate the upper end of the bellows.

Claim 34 (previously presented) The assembly of claim 31, wherein the ballast is secured to the bellows at a location proximate the lower end of the bellows, wherein the float is engageable with portions of the bellows proximate the upper end of the bellows, and wherein upon application of centrifugal force, the ballast and the float exert opposing forces on the bellows to provide the elongation.

P-3959/2P1

Claim 35 (previously presented) The assembly of claim 31, wherein the sealing portion of the bellows between the upper end and the lower end is a toroidal sealing section.

Claim 36 (previously presented) The assembly of claim 32, wherein the ballast is substantially tubular.

Claim 37 (previously presented) The assembly of claim 33, wherein the float is substantially hollow.

Claim 38 (previously presented) The assembly of claim 33, wherein the bellows is substantially hollow and comprises an inwardly directed annular bead proximate the upper end of the bellows, and wherein the float comprises an annular groove engageable with the annular bead of the bellows.

Claim 39 (previously presented) The assembly of claim 31, wherein the tube comprises a closure at its top end, and wherein the separator is releasably engaged to the closure.

Claim 40 (previously presented) The assembly of claim 39, wherein the closure comprises a lower end comprising a recess, and wherein the bellows comprises a section releasably engageable with the recess.

Claim 41 (previously presented) The assembly of claim 40, wherein the recess comprises deflectable arc sections, and wherein the bellows comprises a groove releasably engageable with the deflectable arc sections.

Claim 42 (previously presented) The assembly of claim 31, wherein the bottom end of the tube comprises an opening having a closure engaged therein.

P-3959/2P1

Claim 43 (previously presented) The assembly of claim 38, wherein the upper end of the bellows comprises a conical shape.

Claim 44 (previously presented) The assembly of claim 31, wherein at least a portion of the float is arranged inside the bellows, and wherein at least a portion of the ballast is arranged outside the bellows.

Claim 45 (currently amended) An assembly for enabling separation of a fluid sample into first and second phases, comprising:

- a tube having a bottom, a top, and a cylindrical sidewall therebetween, the bottom and the top having openings with closures engaged therein,

- a separator located in the tube, the separator comprising:

- a deformable section comprising a sealing region, the sealing region providing sealing engagement with the cylindrical sidewall of the tube,

- a ballast section engaged with the deformable section portion, the ballast section having a density greater than the density of the first phase,

- a float section engaged with the deformable section portion, the float section having a density less than the density of the first phase,

- wherein application of centrifugal forces to the tube promotes elongation of the deformable section such that the sealing region is able to move out of sealing engagement with the cylindrical sidewall.

Claim 46 (previously presented) The assembly of claim 45, wherein the deformable section comprises a deformable bellows having an upper end and a lower end, at least a sealing portion of the bellows between the upper end and the lower end providing sealing engagement with the cylindrical sidewall of the tube, wherein the ballast section comprises a ballast engaged with a portion of the bellows, and wherein the float section comprises a float engaged with a portion of the bellows.